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Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General, meeting with OIC Contact Group on Bosnia and Herzegovina, says UNPROFOR achieved all objectives sought in relation to Gorazde; renews call for OIC to establish trust fund for Republic.

+ Fifth Committee approves draft resolution by which General Assembly would authorize Secretary-General to commit up to $1.3 million to finance UNOMIG for four months.

+ Representatives tell Global Conference on Small Island Developing States of problems in implementing sustainable development strategies; cite lack of insurance coverage and shortage of foreign investment.

+ IAEA says it cannot commit to date for full implementation of plan for monitoring and verifying Iraqi nuclear capabilities, but notes Baghdad's positive attitude since high-level talks last year.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali yesterday had a "frank and positive" meeting with the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Contact Group on Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to a United Nations spokesman. The Group consisted of the Foreign Ministers of Pakistan, Iran, Malaysia, Senegal, the Minister of State of Saudi Arabia, the Secretary-General of the OIC, and the Permanent Representatives of Egypt, Tunisia and Turkey.

The Secretary-General briefed the Contact Group on recent developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the actions taken by the United Nations there. He stressed that cooperation between the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was excellent, and said the Force had "achieved the objectives we all wanted" in Gorazde. He also thanked the OIC for its contribution to UNPROFOR and renewed his call for it to establish a trust fund for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Security Council met yesterday at the request of the OIC, and heard numerous calls for a lifting of the arms embargo against Bosnia and

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Herzegovina. Iran's Foreign Minister described the embargo as illegal, immoral and impractical, while Pakistan's Foreign Minister said the United Nations had been "as vulnerable to Serbian bullying as to Serbian duplicity."

Bosnia and Herzegovina's Foreign Minister said the recent ultimatum by NATO and the United Nations had shown what could be achieved when the international community showed resolve. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) told the Council that the conflict could not be resolved by exposing one side to pressure and ultimatums while the other side resisted efforts to negotiate.

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The Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) yesterday approved a draft resolution by which the General Assembly would authorize the Secretary-General to commit up to $1.3 million gross to maintain the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) from 1 July to 31 October.

The Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), C.S.M. Mselle, and the United Nations Controller, Yukio Takasu, assured the Committee that revised estimates would be available in a timely manner following the Security Council's expansion of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). The Council yesterday authorized an increase in the Force's strength of up to 6,550 troops, 150 military observers and 275 civilian police monitors. The increase was in addition to the reinforcement of 3,500 troops approved last month.

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Several speakers have told the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States of the difficulties their countries face in implementing sustainable development strategies. The Conference, which will meet in Bridgetown, Barbados through 6 May, is continuing its week-long general debate. The representative of the Marshall Islands said an increasing number of insurance companies were refusing coverage of island States, making it difficult to attract foreign investment. Grenada said although it had liberalized its economy to encourage foreign investment, a sizable proportion of its gross revenues went to meet external expenses.

The representative of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) said small States must integrate and cooperate to maximize their resources. Recognition of their ecological fragility and the threats posed to sustainable development had reinforced the need for regional action, he added. The representative of Trinidad and Tobago said the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) was the "front line" in the fight against global environmental degradation. The Alliance was planning the first comprehensive strategy aimed at arresting the loss of species and preserving biological diversity, he noted.

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The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has said it is not yet in a position to fully implement the ongoing plan for monitoring and verifying Iraq's nuclear capabilities, nor can it commit to a specific date by which that will happen. However, in a report to the Security Council, the Agency said the positive attitude adopted by Iraq since the start of high-level talks last year would, if continued, speed up implementation of the plan. That report was transmitted to the Council by the Secretary-General in a note dated 22 April.

The IAEA said Iraq had formally agreed last November to comply with the plan, as contained in Council resolution 715 (1991), with a view to having the oil embargo against it lifted. The country had since made an effort to promptly provide the required information, to reconcile discrepancies between its previous declarations and IAEA findings, and to give the necessary assistance to implement the plan. The Agency recalled that the documentation provided by Iraq in the past had left much to be desired in terms of completeness and accuracy. However, new forms and guidelines on using them had been introduced, and -- subject to minor improvements -- an acceptable reporting standard was now at hand.

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